

people picked up off the battlefield in Afghanistan. They weren't wearing uniforms. They weren't state sponsored, but they were there to kill.

And so the fundamental question facing our Government was, what do you do with these people? And so we said that they don't apply under the Geneva Convention, but they'll be treated in accord with the Geneva Convention.

And so I would urge you to go down and take a look at Guantanamo. About 200 or so have been released back to their countries. There needs to be a way forward on the other 500 that are there. We're now waiting for a Federal court to decide whether or not they can be tried in a military court, where they'll have rights, of course, or in the civilian courts. We're just waiting for our judicial process to move the process along.

Make no mistake, however, that many of those folks being detained—in humane conditions, I might add—are dangerous people. Some have been released to their previous countries, and they got out, and they went on to the battlefield again. And I have an obligation, as do all of us who are holding office, to protect our people. That's a solemn obligation we all have. And I believe we're meeting that obligation in a humane way.

As well as—we've got some in custody—Khalid Sheik Mohammed is a classic example, the mastermind of the September the 11th attack that killed over 3,000 of our citizens. And he is being detained because we think he could possibly give us information that might not only protect us but protect citizens in Europe. And at some point in time, he'll be dealt with, but right now, we think it's best that he be kept in custody.

We want to learn as much as we can in this new kind of war about the intention and about the methods and about how these people operate. And they're dangerous, and they're still around, and they'll kill in a moment's notice.

In the long run, the best way to protect ourselves is to spread freedom and human rights and democracy. And—but if you've got questions about Guantanamo, I seriously suggest you go down there and take a look. And—seriously, take an objective look as to how these folks are treated and what has hap-

pened to them in the past, and when the courts make the decision they make, we'll act accordingly.

Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you all very much for coming.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The President met with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg, in his capacity as President of the European Council; and President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission. The President referred to Secretary General Javier Solana of the European Council; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003.

Joint Statement by the United States and the European Union Working Together To Promote Peace, Prosperity and Progress in the Middle East

June 20, 2005

At our Summit in Dromoland last year, the United States and the European Union pledged our support to the governments and the peoples of the Middle East who have expressed their determination to meet the challenges of modernization, to advance political, social and economic progress, to strengthen democracy, and to respect and promote human rights. We offered this support in a spirit of partnership as well as respect and friendship.

Since then, we have strengthened our dialogue on our respective efforts towards promoting progress and stability in the Broader Middle East and the Mediterranean.

At the June 2004 Summit, we reaffirmed our commitment to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and our common vision of the co-existence of two states, Palestine and Israel, by the creation of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state with contiguity in the West Bank living side by side with Israel and its neighbors in peace and security.

Since then, we have witnessed the successful election of a new leader by the Palestinian people. We are now at a moment of opportunity, and, with our partners in the region, we must seize it. In order to achieve and maintain a lasting peace, we recognize the importance of building a climate of mutual trust and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians.

We endorse the May 9, 2005, declaration of the Quartet. We stress the importance of a complete and peaceful Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank in a manner consistent with the road map. We urge the parties to respect their commitments and to refrain from unilateral actions that could prejudge final status issues. We further pledge our full support to the mission of the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn, and we will work with him and the parties to promote viable economic and social development.

We support the holding of free, fair, and transparent multi-party legislative elections in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, under the scrutiny of international observers and with full freedom of movement for candidates and voters, as another vital step forward on the path towards building a reformed and accountable Palestinian Authority.

We desire that the Israeli and Palestinian people live in a secure and stable environment. We affirm our support for the mission of General William Ward and will pursue in close coordination our respective efforts to assist the Palestinian security forces. As is required under the roadmap, there must be effective action against terrorism, dismantling of terrorist infrastructure, a freeze on all settlement activity, and dismantling of outposts.

The United States and the European Union share the objective of a peaceful, secure, democratic, and prosperous broader Middle East and Mediterranean region. With close to €3 billion annually in grants and loans from the EU and approximately \$2.2 billion in assistance and loan guarantees from the U.S., we are the major donors of assistance to the region.

Through our respective efforts, we seek to promote, in close cooperation with our partners, human rights and democracy, increased access to education and economic opportunities through modern and open societies, closer integration within the region and with the global economy. Our ongoing cooperation to promote peace throughout the region will help our partners to reap the full benefit of their efforts and our support.

We welcome the accomplishments of the Barcelona Process which were reviewed at the 7th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Luxembourg ahead of the 10th anniversary leaders meeting in November, as well as the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative, launched in 2002. We reaffirm our support for the G8's Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative. We welcome in particular the establishment of the Forum for the Future and look forward to its next meeting in Bahrain this autumn.

We have instructed our respective experts on the region to intensify their cooperation in order to strengthen further our support for reform and democratic development.

We welcome the successful elections that have recently taken place in Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Lebanon.

While notable progress has been made in a number of countries, significant challenges remain. We welcome the amendment to the Egyptian constitution as progress towards a more broadly-based representative government and encourage the Government of Egypt to play a leadership role by opening its forthcoming elections to international observers. In these, as in all other elections, we stress the importance of freedom of speech, freedom of association and unfettered access to the media, for all candidates.

We share the goal of a peaceful, united and stable Iraq and will continue our cooperative efforts towards this end. The confirmation of the Iraqi Transitional Government following the successful election in January represents an important landmark in the political reconstruction of Iraq. We condemn the terrorist acts of forces seeking to disrupt the lives of the Iraqi people and the political transition process.

Two days from today, at the request of the Iraqi Transitional Government, we will co-

host a conference of nations to express international support for Iraq's political transformation, economic recovery, and reconstruction, and strengthening of public order and the rule of law, in accordance with UNSCR 1546 (2004). We have worked closely together to prepare for this important event and we will pursue these efforts in following up the Conference. Working with the Iraqi authorities, the UN, and other relevant actors, we will seek to contribute to the constitutional process and to support the elections which will take place on the basis of the new Constitution.

We recognize the withdrawal of Syrian military personnel from Lebanon as a positive first step toward Syria's compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1559. We remain insistent that Resolution 1559 be implemented in its entirety, including the disarming of all militias, and the complete and full withdrawal of all Syrian intelligence operatives, as well as an end to interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. We reaffirm our full support for the United Nations' efforts towards these ends.

We urge full cooperation by all parties with the independent international commission of enquiry of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, established by UNSCR 1595 (2005).

We welcome the events that have taken place this year in Lebanon in furtherance of the democratic process, including the recent elections. We recognize the inherent difficulties facing the new government and remain committed to working with the people of Lebanon to strengthen democratic institutions and promote peace and stability.

Once the Lebanese government has defined its reform agenda and should it so request, we will consider convening an international conference to consolidate support for the Lebanese people and the new government.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by the European Union and the United States Working Together To Promote Democracy and Support Freedom, the Rule of Law and Human Rights Worldwide
June 20, 2005

The European Union and the United States believe that the spread of accountable and representative government, the rule of law, and respect for human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are a strategic priority as well as a moral necessity. We will continue to work together to advance these priorities around the world.

The work of the United Nations is central both to democracy and human rights. We welcome the proposals put forward by Kofi Annan to renew the UN's commitment and enhance its effectiveness in these areas. Specifically, we value the UN Secretary General's initiatives for reforming the UN human rights mechanisms and for creating a Peacebuilding Commission. We pledge to support the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund to assist countries in strengthening civil society and democratic institutions.

We express our admiration and pledge our support for all those engaged in the defense of freedom, democracy and human rights, in many cases at great personal risk.

We are encouraged by the efforts of many governments to open their societies and political systems. Recognizing that democratic reform is a process that deserves our support, we promise our solidarity and support to those promoting democracy around the world, be it in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere. We will continue to support pluralism and the development of civil society, and will encourage the political participation of women and minorities.

Free and fair elections are central to democracy. We congratulate the many thousands of citizens who have participated in organizing and observing elections in their own countries and abroad. We pledge to support